



NEWS

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CHP REQUESTS PUBLIC'S HELP TO CATCH REGISTRATION VIOLATORS

The California Highway Patrol is aiming its sights at individuals who illegally register their vehicles in other states, and the law-abiding public can play a big part in the success of the effort. "Some people think they can avoid California registration fees by getting plates from other states," CHP Commissioner Spike Helmick said. "We are asking honest, law abiding citizens to help us find the scofflaws and set things right."

For years the CHP has pursued registration violations on its own. Some officers make it their pet project, keeping an eye peeled for out-of-state vehicles even when they are off duty.

"Some people don't realize that when they move to California they have 20 days to register their vehicle here," Helmick said. "If they don't, that means the state loses the dollars that should rightfully go toward maintaining its infrastructure. It also is unfair to the many honest people who faithfully register their vehicles here."

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Active duty military personnel and their spouses stationed in California are exempt from registering their cars in the state (unless they are originally from California). Federal law allows military personnel to register their vehicles in their home state of record or the last state they were stationed in. Students paying out of state tuition fees who attend public California universities and colleges are also exempt from the registration requirements.

Over the past two years, CHP Officer Dave Costantini from the CHP's South Sacramento office has been pursuing vehicles illegally registered outside of California. Every quarter the fees recovered at that location have increased. The first quarter of 2002 over \$44,000 went into the state's coffers. As more and more people caught his enthusiasm those number continued to grow. In the first quarter of 2004, the amount exceeded \$100,000 for the first time. "And that's just for vehicles spotted in the Sacramento area," Officer Costantini explained.

The new program, called "CHEATERS" (Californians **H**elp **E**liminate **A**ll **T**he **E**vasive **R**egistration **S**cofflaws) will ask Californians to take an active role in spotting vehicles improperly registered outside the state. Beginning today, anyone who spots an out-of-state plate can report it anonymously to the CHP Website (www.chp.ca.gov). The vehicle information reported there will be checked out and the legal owner notified if the car should be registered in California.

"For years people have been taking advantage of the state of California and their neighbors by registering their cars in other states. Here's a chance for everyone who has done the right thing to help the state and get a little payback at the same time," the Commissioner added.

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